

Colton Bone Health Campaign for Latinas

Health Objective

To increase the occurrence of dietary and physical activity behaviors that promote bone health among low-income Latina mothers and their families.

Target Audience

Primary: Low-income, pre-menopausal Latinas in Colton, California with children under the age of 18 in the household.

Secondary: Family members of the primary target audience, particularly children.

1999 – 2000 Objectives

The first year efforts focused on research and planning and included the following:

Conducted a literature review on topics relating to bone health in the target population, key informant interviews, and a scan of bone health campaigns currently underway throughout the United States;

Identified strategies that may result in positive behavior change by the target population; and

Tested message concepts and campaign strategies in focus groups with the primary target population to guide the development of a social marketing plan and establish the foundation of the campaign.

2000 – 2001 Objectives

The second year efforts will focus on development, implementation and evaluation of the campaign. These activities include:

- ☐ Creating culturally-relevant collateral materials that are pre-tested with the target audience;
- ☐ Developing the bone health intervention, evaluation plan and tools; and
- ☐ Training local partners in implementation and conducting pilot projects.

Significance

Osteoporosis is a bone-crippling disease characterized by low bone mass and increased bone fragility. Osteoporosis is a major public health threat for 28 million Americans, 80 percent of whom are women, according to the National Osteoporosis Foundation. According to the most current prevalence figures, California has the greatest number of women with osteoporosis of any state. In 1996, there was an estimated 2.7 million women age 50 and over in California who had osteoporosis or were at risk for developing the disease due to low bone mass. In 2015, this number is expected to increase to 4.9 million. Latina women are at significant risk for developing osteoporosis. The large Latino population of California, which is growing at a faster rate than non-Latino, is a contributing factor to the burden of osteoporosis within the state.

Osteoporosis may result in painful bone fractures, loss of ambulation, and lowered quality of life. One out of two women over age 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. Twenty-percent of those with osteoporosis-related hip fractures die within a year of their injury.

Research now shows that building and maintaining strong bones is a multi-faceted, lifelong undertaking with two major objectives: to increase peak bone mass early in life, and to minimize bone loss later in life. This can be achieved by consuming a diet rich in calcium and vitamin D and engaging in regular, weight-bearing exercise such as walking, higher impact activities such as jumping rope, or resistive exercise such as specific weight-lifting routines.

The average American woman's calcium intake falls well below the recommended levels in all age groups and among all race-ethnic groups. Over half of adults and more than a third of high school students do not participate in vigorous physical activity on a regular basis.

Background

On July 14, 1998, California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition) and Preventive Health Care for the Aging, both of the California Department of Health Services, in partnership with the Dairy Council of California and California Center for Health Improvement, conducted a daylong conference, Addressing Osteoporosis in California. Attendees included osteoporosis experts, health care providers, consumer and industry representatives, public health professionals and health advocates. Conference speakers identified the prevalence of and issues surrounding osteoporosis and provided an overview of the latest osteoporosis research findings. Conference participants then explored opportunities for partnership in an effort to identify strategies to promote bone health in California. One identified strategy was to conduct a social marketing campaign to promote bone health.

Funding

In October of 2000, the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health was awarded funding by California Project LEAN to conduct formative research for a bone health social marketing campaign targeting low-income, pre-menopausal women. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which partially funds the Project LEAN through the Nutrition Network, requires that the projects it funds target the largest groups using food assistance programs. In California, the food stamp eligible population is primarily Latina, African American and Caucasian women and almost half are Latinos.